

## INFORMATION PAPER

**MCHB-TS-RDE**  
**8 February 2002**

### **SUBJECT: Occupational and Environmental Health Surveillance and Assessment of the Pentagon following the 11 September 01 Terrorist Attack**

**ARMY POSITION:** Whether engaged in armed conflict, deployed in support of peacekeeping operations, or protecting our service member and civilians at home the Department of Defense (DOD) is concerned about any situation that could threaten the health of troops and civilian workers. In response to the 11 September 01 terrorist attack on the Pentagon and the subsequent fire and water damage, extensive sampling was conducted to determine the levels of contamination present in and around the building, insure it was safe from harmful levels so Pentagon workers could safely occupy the building, and perform their jobs.

### **TALKING POINTS:**

- On September 11, 2001 at 0938 hours, a hijacked Boeing 757 crashed into the west side of the Pentagon near the heliport area. Structural, fire, and water damage resulted in the west side of the Pentagon in the areas of corridors 3 through 6.
- All personnel were evacuated from the building as emergency response personnel from the Department of Defense and surrounding communities responded to fire and medical emergencies.
- On September 11, 2001 at 1300 hours, USACHPPM assembled and deployed a Special Medical Augmentation Response Team-Preventive Medicine (SMART-PM) to support the medical response to the Pentagon disaster. The mission of the SMART-PM was to assess initial acute occupational health hazards for personnel occupying the Pentagon and to recommend further action for the assessment of chronic health risks.

### **BACKGROUND:**

a. Historical Program Perspective. To support the DOD in times of crisis, the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, at the direction of the U.S. Army Medical Command (MEDCOM), formed the SMART-PM to respond to preventive medicine emergencies. This program was requested by the MEDCOM in the late 1990's to support various types of medical emergencies.

b. Program Description. The SMART-PM collects, analyzes, and summarizes occupational and environmental health exposure surveillance data generated from historical, existing, and planned surveillance efforts. This information will be linked with health outcome disease and injury surveillance efforts. This will allow preventive medicine personnel to focus intervention efforts towards areas of high exposure probability to occupational and environmental health contaminants.

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c. A comprehensive environmental assessment of the Pentagon was conducted in the wake of the terrorist incident on 11 September 01. A multidisciplinary assessment team comprised of technical experts from the three Services and Pentagon Real Estate and Federal Facilities Division sampled the air, surfaces, water, and workers in the building for hazards typically resulting from fires in buildings. The data from the monitoring activities was compiled by both Pentagon Real Estate and Federal Facilities Division and the USACHPPM Deployment Environmental Surveillance Program. The assessment was completed and the potential hazards in the building were characterized. This was followed by USACHPPM Health Information Operations coordination with the DiLorenzo Tricare and Civilian Occupational Health Clinic for the development of materials that best communicated any hazards identified. Interpersonal communication between the staff of the DiLorenzo Tricare and Civilian Occupational Health Clinic, the Pentagon Safety Office, and building occupants was the primary avenue of information dissemination. The sampling data from the Pentagon support the conclusion that the health risks from all sampled parameters, both pre and post cleanup, are minimal, if any.

**CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST:** Historically, the US Congress has supported the protection of our uniformed and civilian DOD workforce, to include occupational and environmental health surveillance. When DOD is perceived as not protecting our service members, as occurred during the Persian Gulf War, the Congress has severely criticized the DOD. The proactive response to the 11 September 01 attack on the Pentagon by the MEDCOM and SMART-PM was a medical and scientific effort that represents the best of the DOD.

**LATEST RECAP:** The FY02 costs for occupational and environmental health surveillance efforts at the Pentagon related to the 11 September attack were \$115 thousand. Additional costs for sustaining occupational and environmental health force protection at the Pentagon were \$196 thousand.

**BUDGET AND PROGRAM DATA (\$000):** The FY01 costs for occupational and environmental health surveillance efforts in response to the 11 September 01 terrorist attack on the Pentagon were \$541 thousand. Total costs for occupational and environmental health surveillance efforts related to the 11 September attack on the Pentagon were \$852 thousand.

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